Syntax of simple verbal constructions in Wolof
Plan

- Wolof language
- Verbal system
- Topological model
- Wolof patterns
- Predicative marker
- Wolof topology
- S-AUX-O-V order in Wolof?
- Conclusion
Wolof language

- Spoken in Senegambia

**Classification:**
- Niger-Congo
  - Atlantic
    - Northern

**Typology:**
- Morphology: Agglutinative
- Syntax: SVO
Based on ”conjugations”

They carry informations about:
- mood
- tense
- aspect
- information structure
Verbal system 2/4

- **Narrative:**
  - ma lekk ceeb
  - 1SG eat rice

- **Subject Focus:**
  - ma-a lekk ceeb
  - 1SG-SFOC eat rice

- **Presentative:**
  - ma-a ngi lekk ceeb
  - 1SG-PRES eat rice

- **Object Focus:**
  - ceeb la-a lekk
  - rice OFOC-1SG eat

- **Verb Focus:**
  - da-ma lekk ceeb
  - VFOC-1SG eat rice
Perfect:  
\[ \text{lekk} \quad \text{na-a} \quad \text{ceeb} \]
\[ \text{eat} \quad \text{PRF-1SG} \quad \text{rice} \]

Future:  
\[ \text{dina-a} \quad \text{lekk} \quad \text{ceeb} \]
\[ \text{FUT-1SG} \quad \text{eat} \quad \text{rice} \]

Optative:  
\[ \text{na-a} \quad \text{lekk} \quad \text{ceeb} \]
\[ \text{OPT-1SG} \quad \text{eat} \quad \text{rice} \]

Imperative:  
\[ \text{lekk-al} \quad \text{ceeb !} \]
\[ \text{eat-IMP.2SG} \quad \text{rice} \]
Tense / Aspect / Polarity

- **dama**  
  VFOC.1SG  
  'I have eaten rice'

- **dama**  
  VFOC.1SG  
  'I had eaten rice'

- **dama=y**  
  VFOC.1SG=IPFV  
  'I am eating rice'

- **dama**  
  VFOC.1SG  
  'I have not eaten rice'
Model used to describe linear order  
No claim about hierarchical organisation  

**Definitions:**
- **Field:** syntactic position in the sentence
- **Domain:** sequence of fields
Topological model 2/3

- Used in Germanic linguistics to describe V2 phenomenon:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before field</th>
<th>Left bracket</th>
<th>Middle field</th>
<th>Right bracket</th>
<th>After field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vorfeld</strong></td>
<td><strong>Linke satzklammer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mittelfeld</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rechte satzklammer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nachfeld</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VF</td>
<td>daß</td>
<td>Lisa die Blume</td>
<td>gießen würde</td>
<td>morgen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>würde</td>
<td>Lisa die Blume</td>
<td>gießen</td>
<td>morgen ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>gießt</td>
<td>die Blume.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Also used with Arabic, Catalan, French, Greek, Pashto, etc.
Field selection:
- Category: NP, VP, PP, etc.
- Function: subject, object, etc.
- Information structure: focus, topic
- Semantic type: human/non-human, etc.

Field typology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element E \ Field F</th>
<th>Take only element E</th>
<th>May take other kinds of element</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appear only in the field F</td>
<td><strong>Strictly reserved</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reserved</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May appear in other fields</td>
<td><strong>Strictly appropriate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Appropriate</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Wolof patterns 1/3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lex Sbj</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>Sbj</th>
<th>Obj</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Lex Obj</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VFoc</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>dafa</td>
<td>Ø [3SG]</td>
<td></td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>da</td>
<td>-ma</td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>dina</td>
<td>Ø [3SG]</td>
<td></td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dina</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>na</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRF</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>Ø [3SG]</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>-a [1SG]</td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Wolof patterns 2/3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>PM</th>
<th>Sbj</th>
<th>Obj</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Lex Obj</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>CFoc</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
<td>la</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>démb</td>
<td>la</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>démb</td>
<td>la</td>
<td>-a [1SG]</td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td>lekk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SFoc</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ma-</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td>lekk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>a ngi</td>
<td></td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ma-</td>
<td>a ngi</td>
<td></td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td>lekk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sbj</td>
<td></td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Obj</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Omar</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ceeb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ma [1SG]</td>
<td>lekk</td>
<td>ko [3SG]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wolof patterns 3/3

- 5 morphosyntactic patterns
- Patterns 3 and 4 = focus constructions
  → with focus position
- Patterns 2 and 4: Sbj = Lex Sbj
- Patterns 1 and 3: Sbj ≠ Lex Sbj (topic)
- Pattern 5 is different:
  - SVO ; no predicative marker
  - Sbj = Lex Sbj ; Obj = Lex Obj
Predicative marker

- Head of the sentence
- Can be used as a copula
  
  \[
  \text{doktoor} \quad \text{la} \\
  \text{doctor} \quad \text{CFOC} \\
  \text{'he is a doctor'}
  \]

- Is not a verb
  
  \[
  *\text{doktoor} \quad \text{la-wul} \\
  \text{doctor} \quad \text{CFOC-NEG}
  \]

- Distinct lexical category
Wolof topology

- **Main domain:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic-sbj Field</th>
<th>Focus Field</th>
<th>Predicative Field</th>
<th>Subject Field</th>
<th>Clitic-obj Field</th>
<th>Verb Field</th>
<th>Object Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Selection:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Function Info Struct</th>
<th>Info Struc</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Typology:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Reserved</th>
<th>Strictly Reserved</th>
<th>Strictly Appropriate</th>
<th>Strictly Appropriate</th>
<th>Strictly Reserved</th>
<th>Strictly Appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
S-AUX-O-V order in Wolof?

- Common word order in West Africa (especially in Mande languages)
- Wolof: only with lexical subject & clitic object (as in another Atlantic language: Biafada)
- From Proto-Atlantic or Mande influence?
  - Different order in Pulaar and Seereer
  - AUX in Wolof as predicative marker in Mande
    → rather Mande influence
Conclusion

- 5 morphosyntactic patterns in Wolof
- Predicative marker is the head of the sentence
- Predicative markers express TAM, but are not verbs
- There are 7 fields in the main domain
- There are occupation rules
- Word order in Wolof seems to be influenced by Mande languages
Danke
Thank you
Jëřëjëf
Merci